

## **WSDOT Aviation Monthly Report August 2004**

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1. [More Details Revealed About Port Angeles Plane Crash](#)
2. [Favorable Bids Allow Goldendale to Repave All Airport Surfaces](#)
3. [Easton State Airport Web Camera Now Online](#)
4. [Air Search and Rescue Volunteers Locate Crash Site on August 21](#)
5. [State Airports Help to Battle Summer Blazes](#)
6. [2005 Water Landing Guide Preparing For Take-off](#)
7. [WSDOT Aviation Conducts Medical Facility Analysis](#)
8. [WSDOT Investigates Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles](#)



### **1. More Details Revealed About Port Angeles Plane Crash**

On the evening of August 3 WSDOT Aviation was notified that a Cessna 182 aircraft traveling from Port Angeles to Seattle was overdue.

Throughout the night, WSDOT Aviation coordinated with the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC), Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD),

Olympic National Park Operations, and Clallam County Search and Rescue. Around 6:15 a.m., a passenger aboard the downed aircraft called the Clallam County 911 center. Unsure of her location, she reported that the pilot was deceased but that she and the other passenger had sustained only minor injuries.

Within 30 minutes of her call, two Washington Air Search and Rescue (WASAR) aircraft spotted the plane wreckage while flying overhead. Through deteriorating weather conditions, the search aircraft remained over the site long enough to reassure the survivors that help was on its way. The passenger called Clallam County 911 again to report seeing and hearing the rescue aircraft.

While a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter attempted to rescue the passengers, the unfavorable weather forced it out of the area. After arriving on the scene, ground teams were able to rescue the surviving passengers.

At the time of the crash, weather at the Port Angeles Airport was overcast at 3,900 feet. The aircraft crashed south of the airport in a steep canyon with peaks as high as 6,000 feet. The crash site was at the 3,500-foot level.

The Cessna 182 wreckage was recovered on Saturday, August 7, according to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). No determination was made as to the cause of the crash.

## **2. Favorable Bids Allow Goldendale to Repave All Airport Surfaces**

Through its Local Airport Aid Grant Program, WSDOT Aviation awarded the City of Goldendale with two airport paving grants: one to overlay the runway surface and another to construct a vehicular parking area on the airport's landside. After receiving several bids below the construction estimate, Goldendale determined that the WSDOT Aviation grant would also cover the cost to repave the entire ramp. They are now combining both grants into one large project. Given the high price of oil, the low bids came as a surprise; however, WSDOT Aviation is pleased to complete more paving work for the same amount of money.

## **3. Easton State Airport Web Camera Now Online**

WSDOT Aviation is now broadcasting images from Easton State Airport on its web site. The Easton camera joins other airport web cameras in the state providing pilots with a real-time look at weather conditions. The next airports scheduled to receive web cameras include Jefferson County International Airport (Port Townsend), Stehekin State Airport (Stehekin), Methow Valley State Airport (Winthrop), and the Columbia Gorge Regional Airport (The Dalles).



To view the Easton State airport web camera and others like it, go to:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/webcam/default.htm>

## **4. Air Search and Rescue Volunteers Locate Crash Site on August 21**

On Saturday, August 21 the FAA notified WSDOT Aviation of an aircraft crash landing between Kelso and Toledo, Washington. Departing that evening from McMinnville, Oregon, the plane was heading to Everett with two adults and one child on board.

Shortly after the crash, one of the victims called 911 using a cell phone. Though unsure of his exact location, the caller reported being close to a triangular field. Attempts by

rescuers to maintain contact with him were unsuccessful. There was no signal from the aircraft's Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT), which is usually activated upon impact.

Using information derived from the cell phone call, a Washington Air Search and Rescue (WASAR) aircraft spotted the burning wreckage and directed ground teams from Cowlitz County to the scene. The two passengers survived the crash; however, the pilot was found badly injured and later passed away. One survivor had left the scene to look for help, leaving a trail of plane parts behind him to direct rescuers. He was later found and brought back to the site by people driving around the logging roads.

The FAA and NTSB are investigating the cause of the accident.



## **5. State Airports Help to Battle Summer Blazes**

As wildfires burned in the state this summer, several state-owned airports were called into action by various firefighting agencies.

Stehekin State Airport (north end of Lake Chelan) was used to support the Deep Harbor and SiSi Ridge fires. Emergency personnel also used the airport to ferry firefighters, equipment and fire patrol.

Methow State Airport (in the Methow Valley) was home to the North Cascades Smoke Jumpers. The airport was also used frequently to ferry smoke jumpers and equipment to various fires in the state. Methow State also served as a helicopter base for fighting several fires in the Winthrop area.

Tieton State Airport (near Rimrock) was used to support forest firefighting near White Pass. Several helicopters using the airport as a base made quick work of many fires in the area.

Lake Wenatchee State Airport (next to Lake Wenatchee State Park) served as the firebase for the Dirty Face Peak fire burning within a couple miles of the airstrip.

Jim Scott, State Airports Maintenance Supervisor recently visited Lake Wenatchee State to inspect conditions and meet with the Forest Service Fire Manager. "I am very pleased with the care that the various firefighting agencies have shown to the airport," said Scott. "Operating several heavy lift helicopters, supporting equipment, and a firebase for several hundred people can take a toll on any facility. Lake Wenatchee State is in terrific shape and every effort was made by emergency personnel to preserve the airport."

## **6. 2005 Water Landing Guide Preparing For Take-off**

Due to many requests from our floatplane-flying customers, WSDOT Aviation is preparing a 2005 Water Landing Guide. After updating information on seaplane bases and landing areas by county, Marilee Jensen, WSDOT Aviation Executive Assistant, will meet with the local Seaplane Association for their input. The Seaplane Association has offered to help shoot aerial photographs of landing areas for the guide.

Registered Washington pilots can anticipate receiving the guide upon request in Summer 2005.



## **7. WSDOT Aviation Conducts Medical Facility Analysis**

The speed and quality of air transportation allows medical and emergency service personnel to offer critical care to everyone who needs it. WSDOT Aviation is currently conducting a Medical Facility Analysis to assess how hospitals, doctors, and related medical staff use general aviation airports and aircraft to reach all areas of Washington State. The objectives of the study are to:

- Track the use of airports and helipads for medical and emergency purposes.
- Study the proximity of the airports in relation to the medical facilities.
- Gather information on hospital services.
- Identify aviation uses that are connected to hospitals.
- Assess improvement needs at airports that hospitals use regularly.

The data collection is designed to limit subjective answers as much as possible and provide objective and quantitative information pertaining to the air transportation system and its users.



## **8. WSDOT Investigates Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles**

Recent successes of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) in military operations has led to a flood of requests for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to approve commercial uses such as highway and border patrol, search and rescue, and avalanche control on mountain highways. While technology exists today, many unresolved questions still loom

around regulatory issues concerning aircraft certification and safety. For example, what happens if a ground operator loses contact with an UAV? How can air traffic control monitor UAV activities so that they are not in conflict with other aircraft? Currently, the FAA is granting certification of operations for test flights. More information is available at: [www.uavforum.com](http://www.uavforum.com)